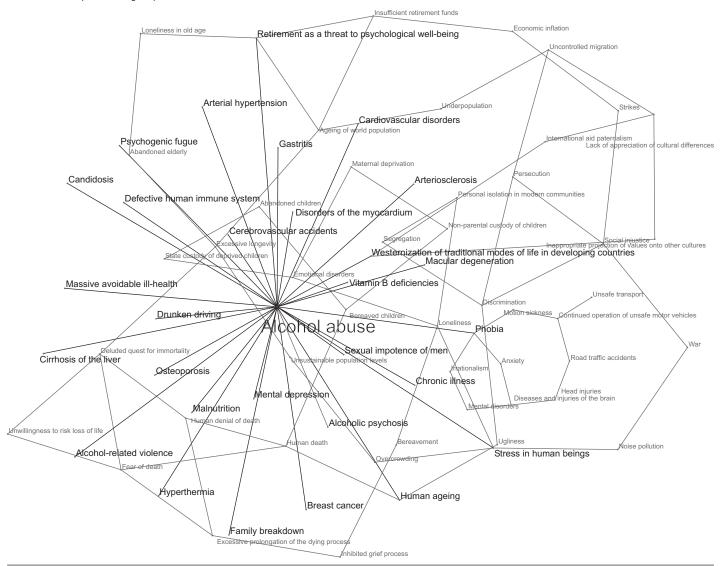
Figure 10.1.2.2. Alcohol abuse

Database: World Problems and Issues **Link type:** aggravates problems

Network nodes: 76

UIA database: http://db.uia.org/scripts/sweb.dll/uiaf?DD=PR&DR=D0153



Loohol causes loss of muscle control by reducing blood flow to the cerebellum. Mood shifts are linked to imbalances created in the rate of metabolic activity in various parts of the brain cortex. Alcohol may be used to dull the pangs of hunger, fatigue, disease and mental depression. From ancient times, drinking has been connected with excess and derived troubles. Drunkenness seems to have occurred early in human history, and for the most part people did not distinguish between drunkenness and alcoholism as it is understood today -- that alcoholism is a psychobiological disease (a drug addiction or drug dependency) marked by an inconsistent helplessness of the victim to refrain from resorting to alcohol, and inconsistent helplessness to refrain from drunkenness. It was natural to condemn all drunkenness as wrongdoing. Seneca, in the first century, however, distinguished between drunkenness and addiction, and many have followed this line of thinking. A practical definition is that an alcoholic seriously abuses alcohol and drinks intoxicating amounts of alcoholic beverages several times a day on a regular basis. Alcoholics are excessive drinkers whose addiction to alcohol has attained such a degree that there is noticeable mental disturbance or interference with their bodily or mental health, their interpersonal relations, and their smooth social and economic functioning, or they are those people who show the signs of such development. They are unable to recognize the deleterious effects of their habit or, recognizing them, are nonetheless unable to curtail their alcohol consumption and continue in an almost compulsive way to drink heavily. Alcohol abuse can be distinguished from chronic alcoholism -- which is morbid dependence on alcohol with an easily awakened craving for alcohol, as well as loss of control (shakes and sweating) -- in that the physical and mental complications of the latter only occur in a minority of alcoholics. The complications of alcohol abuse occur primarily in the social sphere. The alcoholic takes alcohol as a mood-altering drug. He/she very early comes to rely more and more on defence mechanisms including, as well as outright denial and rationalizations, the mechanism of projection, namely the ascribing of his own defects to others; thus everything and everybody is wrong, particularly his family who may already suffer at the alcoholic's hands at a time when friends still think him to be a decent and reasonable person. Children's personality development may often be significantly affected by the alcoholic's unpredictable attitude and behaviour, leading to disturbed emotional relations with parents. Complications also occur at work. Alcoholism tends to release aggression which may be directed against others in anti-social and criminal acts, as well as in traffic accidents.